

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

COUNTRY East Germany

REPORT

25X1

TOPIC Merseburg Airfield

416862

EVALUATION

PLACE OBTAINED

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DATE OF CONTENT

DATE OBTAINED

DATE PREPARED 19 February 1954

REFERENCES

PAGES 2 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

REMARKS

This is UNEVALUATED Information

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1. Between 17 and 24 January 1954, comparatively little air activity was conducted at Merseburg airfield. Only a few local flights were made by MiG-15 or U-MiG-15s. There was frost with temperatures of 25 centigrades below zero, a changing degree of cloudiness, usually good visibility, and mostly gusty easterly wind. After 25 January, except for a few days, there was intensive air activity, mostly formation flying, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Individual U-MiG-15 and formations of four aircraft, with a total of up to 32 MiG-15 or U-MiG-15s were observed aloft. The take-offs were made in groups of two or in formations of four, the distance between two groups being 100 to 200 meters. After the take-offs, the aircraft assembled while flying a wide left curve. The individual formations of four aircraft flew in wedge formation with echelon to the left. Various types of formations were practiced in formation flights involving 32 aircraft. The aircraft were once observed flying in two lines aft of each other; each line consisted of four wedge formations. Another time, 32 aircraft flew in one line and displayed good flight discipline, while making turns of 180 degrees. A third formation observed was the echelon formation to the right or left. The aircraft landed in elements of twos. Noteworthy was the observation that the take-offs and landings were made with tail wind, although there was a strong and gusty wind. The landings were performed well and without any signs of uncertainty.

2. On two or three days during the period of observation, night flying was practiced after 6 p.m.. The aircraft individually took off toward the west, also with tail wind, turned to the east, and finally landed coming from the east, without circling another time over the field before landing. the aircraft crossed approximately over Leipzig and were directed toward the airfield by radio direction finding. During night flights, the usual position lights on the aircraft were switched on. Two additional white lights were seen under the fuselage when the landing gear was extended. No landing lights were switched on. The runway was lighted by a search-light located about 1,000 meters east of the eastern end of the runway. About 100 meters east of this searchlight was a truck mounting a ball-shaped red lamp which emitted two long flashes and, after an interval, three short flashes. On various days, individual Po-2s landed at the field and, after a short stay, again took off. The aircraft came from the north or southeast. They always departed in the same direction. the aircraft were courier planes.

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3. On 7 February, a Li-2 approached from the east, landed at the field and, after a short stay, again took off heading east. No special starting procedures were observed on the aircraft although it was very cold. However, the period of warming up the engine lasted longer than usual.

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5. From the intensive air activity observed, with more than 40 aircraft seen aloft at the same time on some days, while additional aircraft were still parked on the field [redacted] a total of 65 to 70 MiG-15 or U-MiG-15s were stationed at the field. Two alert flights were daily observed being parked south of the east end of the runway. 25X1

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[redacted] Comment. Intensive training in formation flying was also reported from other airfields in the Soviet Zone of Germany during the period under review. However, formations of up to 32 aircraft were not observed at any other airfield than Merseburg. During 1953, an average of 33 MiG-15 or U-MiG-15s were observed at Merseburg airfield. This number exceeded by 5 to 8 aircraft the aircraft strength of other airfields which were also occupied by only one fighter regiment. This larger aircraft strength at Merseburg airfield could be explained by the presence at Erfurt-Bindersleben airfield of an alert unit which was assigned to the fighter division in Merseburg. However, since late November 1953,

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[redacted] a considerable increase of aircraft at Merseburg airfield which cannot be explained. The observations made at other airfields in the Soviet Zone of Germany did not yield any indications of a possible transfer to Merseburg of another fighter unit of the Twenty-Fourth Air Army. The presence of a second alert flight [redacted]

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[redacted] however, indicate that a second unit is stationed at Merseburg airfield.

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